

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL FUEL

Week #2 of a 4-Week Series, "The Power of Full Engagement"

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So how many people would like to have a better life with greater health, happiness and success? How many people have at least one area in your life that you would like to improve, change or be better? Or maybe a whole lot better? *[Laughs]* And how many people know that there is still more in you -- more genius, more talent, more beauty and greatness -- that you have not fully owned or expressed yet? Anybody?

And what if I told you that the prerequisite to a better life, to greater health, happiness and success ... the prerequisite to improving your life and living your best self comes down to one thing, and that is how fully engaged you are in living your own life. How fully engaged you are in the work that you do. How fully engaged you are in your relationship. How fully engaged you are in your own self-care. How fully engaged you are in your spiritual life.

I just want you to think about it. How engaged are you in your life right now? And how much do you think you could be engaged? How much more do you actually want to be engaged?

We're in the second of a four-week series on the book called *The Power of Full Engagement*. And, in it, the two authors -- Loehr and Schwartz -- say that being engaged is the absolute key to high performance and effectiveness in our lives. And being fully engaged in our lives actually also comes down to one thing ... and that is how wisely we use and manage our most precious resource. We often think that managing our time -- time management -- is our most precious resource. But they say that the most precious resource we have is our energy. Because life is energy. Every word we speak is energy. Our bodies are energy. Our thoughts are energy. Our actions are energy. And the key to living a more effective life is to learn how to manage our energy.

And there is physical energy. Mental energy. Emotional energy. Spiritual energy. And it is the most significant factor in living a more engaged and a better life.

So there's two kind of interesting things about the whole idea about energy. And the first one is that we actually control our own energy. Time is fixed; it's 24 hours in a day, 60 seconds in a minute. It is always the same. But our energies are not always the same. And we actually have way more control over our level and our quantity and quality of energy than we realize. The way we use our energy -- or sometimes misuse our energy -- makes a difference between us draining our energy, losing our energy, and depleting energy ... or the difference between renewing our energy, increasing our energy and building our energy capacity. Learning to consciously and intelligently use all of our different energies is the absolute foundation to live more fully, to live more creatively, and live more effectively.

The second interesting thing about energy is that energy has a natural rhythmic flow and movement. The universal force of energy actually has a cyclical flow to it. Like, things just ebb and flow; that is the natural situation and flow of energy. You know, the tide is high; the tide is low. It comes in and out. The sun rises; the sun sets. The seasons change. Things come and go. We're born and we die. There is a natural flow and a rhythmic energy to life. It isn't always a constant; it is always fluctuating. It is moving.

In the book, it says there is an oscillating energy in an oscillating Universe and we are oscillating beings. Because it is always moving and flowing in that way.

And, similarly, we work and rest. We expend energy and we replenish energy. We stress and we recover. That is the absolute natural flow of how energy works for all of us. You know, the circadian rhythms say you just don't sleep continuously; you sleep, actually, in cycles: 90 to 120 minutes that are cycles. And there's also ultradian rhythms, which is actually similar cycles for our minds and our bodies that are equally 90 to 120 minutes. That we need to take a break every 90 to 120 minutes. And our bodies are always giving us signals, like yawning or feeling a little tired or stressed or tense or distracted.

And so these rhythms are actually built in us and working for our favor. And when we work with them, we can actually optimize and maximize the quality of our energy flow and how effective we are in all areas of our lives. But we need to learn how to balance and stay in that flow.

But, unfortunately, our culture teaches us to ignore the natural flow; to do our best to override. And it actually teaches us to live out of balance. How many people find themselves out of balance on a fairly regular basis. Okay; about four of us. Good! **[Congregation laughs]** That works out well. **[Laughs]**

And the question we would ask is: why is it that we are out of balance so often? And you know what the reason is? It's because our culture teaches us to be out of balance. We have a thing in our culture where we want everything, and we want it now. We want money. We want power. We want recognition. You know, we work hard to develop status. We work hard to prove that we're worthy. We work hard to have all the little toys that we think will make us happy. We want it all, and we will work for it, even if it kills us. We will work ourselves to the bone for it.

There's a word in Japanese. I'll butcher it, so I won't even tell you what it is. But it actually means "death by work." That the Japanese culture, our culture, and there are probably other cultures revere hard work so much to the detriment of our own well-being. Like a badge of honor. Working ourselves to death actually has some level of respect.

You know ... *"I work 60 hours a week."*

"Oh yeah? I work 80 hours a week."

"I work all night!"

"Oh yeah? I take my computer on vacation with me."

"I eat my lunch at my desk!"

"Oh yeah? I take no breaks!"

"Yeah, I cancel engagements and things with my family."

"Oh yeah? I sometimes don't eat all day just so I can be successful, wealthy and happy." [Congregation laughs]

I mean, it sounds ridiculous! But we want happiness and success so much ... but we ignore the natural rhythms that are trying to support us and help us in living more effectively. We want our energy high all the time, even if we have to do it artificially with caffeine or Red Bull or ... what is there? A five-hour energy drink? I mean, there are all kinds of stuff out there.

But the worst one is: we keep pushing beyond our limits. When we get those signs and signals from our bodies, we keep pushing and pushing. And it triggers the "fight or flight" response in us, and it releases hormones for stress and to defend ourselves. And those, over time, make us more irritable and more aggressive. And they actually become toxic in us. Trying to keep pushing ourselves beyond our natural limits actually hurts ourselves in the long run. And, unfortunately, it teaches us to live out of balance.

We live in a space where we think that rest and relaxing and downtime is "soft" and weak and passive. And yet, they're replenishing. They're renewing. They're rebuilding us in great and amazing ways.

I quoted last week the 23rd Psalm. It says, *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul."*

And one of the aspects of not being in want is to learn how to relax. How to rest. How to renew. And how to restore. And what they're saying in this book is that we are mostly out of balance in our lives, and we need to rebalance in all those key areas, and work with that natural rhythm and flow that's there to help us. That's here to support us so we can maximize our performance, not undermine the very happiness and success and good that we want in our lives.

Last week your homework was to look at the areas of your life where you feel that you're not fully engaged. And where you're not in balance; where you're out of balance. The second thing was to pay attention to some of the natural rhythms that life and your body is giving you. And the third one is to develop some rituals: some rituals of replenishment; some rituals of renewal.

Today we're going to look at how to manage and balance our physical and our emotional fuel. Our physical and emotional energy. So, on a scale of 1 to 10, how well would you say you are good at balancing your physical energy? Maintaining your physical energy? And how good are you at managing and balancing your emotional energy?

Today we're going to look at how we can improve balancing our physical and emotional energies. Let's start with physical.

Anybody ever felt like you were physically drained? Like you just couldn't do any more? You just had no energy? Without physical energy, it would affect every single area of our lives. It is important that foundational energy -- physical energy -- provides for all areas of our lives. It is the fundamental source of energy for life, itself. And sometimes we think physical energy, like athletes, need a lot of physical energy. But if you had a desk job, you'd need physical energy. Anybody alive needs physical energy. And there are five sources of physical energy.

We get energy from food. We get energy from sleep. We get energy from exercise. We get energy from water. And there's one more, and I'll have you guess that in a minute.

So how many people would say you could improve the quality of your diet? The frequency of your exercise? Your sleep and water? Anybody? Any of those? Raise your hand! I think pretty well everyone's raising their hand! And that is because sometimes we are just out of balance in taking care of our bodies.

You know, the Bible tells us that our bodies are the temple of the Living God. Your body is the temple of the Living God, the greatest gift God has given you! Because it's the vehicle through which you experience and enjoy life -- that you take actions and have experiences.

Now, based on the way you treat your body -- in terms of sleep and water and exercise and food -- would you say you're treating your body like it's a temple? Because I know there are times that I don't treat my body like a temple. And sometimes the simplest things of not getting enough sleep or eating fast food or doing other things ... there are ways that we are not honoring our bodies.

Could you imagine how different our levels of energy would be if we did these four or five things more consistently? More healthy? And more in the flow of the natural rhythm?

You know, one of the things is we tend to be out of balance a lot, which means we're doing too much in one area and not enough in another. Like, you ever eat too much, anybody? **[Congregation laughs]** And I'll bet you've had times where you've gone the other way: where we haven't eaten much at all. I'll bet you we've all had not enough sleep. I'll bet you we've all had not enough exercise. You know, I don't hear too much about too much exercise ... but it can go off balance in any of these directions.

So one of the things we need to do is learn how to balance the energies, and it will actually increase the flow of the energy we have to live, to create, and to enjoy our lives.

You know, I'm not going to say a lot about eating other than: what they say is that five or six small meals throughout the day is the best thing you can do for your energy. Fuel the body with what it needs for a few hours, and then let it burn it up. Fuel it some more. Fuel it some more. It is actually better to eat smaller meals and eat more consistently.

I did this years ago in Kansas City. It was probably the best I ever felt in my life! I think I had something at 6, 9, 3, 6 and 9. You know; three of them were shakes, and the other ones were just chicken breasts and broccoli ... it was not the most fun diet I ever had. **[Congregation laughs]** But the energy was there!

Because you're fueling your body at intervals. It's portion control and doing it frequently and, of course, having good quality to eat, as well.

The other one is water. Dehydration affects us more than we realize. Our muscles ache; they're weak; they're not as efficient. You know, our organs don't work as well. And they've shown us in a study in Australia that having five glasses of water a day versus two glasses of water a day ... that when you have only two glasses of water a day, you are 50% more likely to have some health issues that are often related around your heart.

You know, exercise has shown to improve your mood. To improve your health. You miss less days at work. You tend to be more efficient physically and emotionally, as well. And so, we could just go on about that, but I think you know a lot about that.

The other one is sleep. Studies have shown over and over and over again: seven, eight hours is ideal. That, when you sleep four hours or less, that you have a higher chance of dying early. Two-and-a-half times early death by not getting enough sleep! You ever tried to function on a lack of sleep? You can't think as well. You don't feel as good. It is stunning how renewing and repairing and rejuvenating sleep truly is.

You know, there's our natural body rhythms. We all have a natural low flow of energy somewhere in the mid-afternoon. We all do. Everyone. It is just a part of the human experience. You know how in some countries they take a siesta? They have a little break in the afternoon. In Europe, some of them close from noon to 2 o'clock. It is because they're balancing in that natural rhythm ... to actually take a rest and renew.

Einstein said before he solved a problem, he would take a nap. Naps are absolutely powerful!

Here's what Winston Churchill said about naps and sleeping. He said, *"You must sleep between lunch and dinner and no halfway measures. Take off your clothes and get into bed. That's what I always do, Don't think you will be doing less work because you are sleeping during the day. That's a foolish notion held by people who have no imagination. You will actually accomplish more."*

He says if you take a nap in the afternoon, that you will ... it's like having two days! Or at least one-and-a-half days of effective production. Because sleep is so powerful and renewing.

So that's four. What do you think the fifth benefit that gives us energy is? Anybody want to guess? **[Congregants shout out]** Prayer? Good, but that's not the answer I'm looking for! **[Ha ha!]** No; it's physical energy. You know what it is? It's your breathing patterns. That when we're frightened ... **[Gasps inwardly twice]** We suck our breath in and we breathe short breaths. But to be healthy and more energized ... just everybody take a deep breath. Just slowly release it and then slowly go deeper again. Just controlling the quality of our breathing can actually energize us.

If your energy is low, or you've just come through something that's really stressful, it's hugely important to slow down and take some deep, powerful breaths. It will relax; it will renew; and it will replenish you.

I looked at that list this week -- these five things -- and I thought to myself, *"I could use improvement in every single one of them!"* But the one I noticed that I didn't realize how much it was impacting me, was I used to drink a lot of water. But over the last eight or nine months, I have not drank much water. I've been drinking like maybe one bottle -- maybe two bottles -- a day. So on Tuesday I started drinking three and four and five bottles a day. And on Friday, it was the best my body has felt in a while.

My body has been aching. I've been like working out and stuff. But it's been hurting way more than normal. And I'll tell you: just hydrating my body has been one of the best things. And you know what I do? First thing in the morning: I drink a bottle of water. It is the ... because you have to make it a ritual. You have to create it as a normal pattern. So that is my pattern.

And the other one is: I went to bed a little bit earlier. And, again, I did that Thursday, Friday. And, again, Friday: I felt really good. And I pray and hope that I continue these, because it really does make an absolute difference.

So I ask you: for your physical fuel, do you think you could use a little more energy in your life? And which one or two of these would you be willing to create a ritual for either eating better, sleeping better, drinking more water, exercise or in your breathing patterns? Because I guarantee you, even if you just do one or two of these, you will increase your physical fuel. You'll increase your energy to be more engaged in all aspects of your life.

The next one is emotional fuel. I'm sure we've all had a time where we felt emotionally exhausted. We have all ... Life is an emotional experience! With some heavy emotions of anger and jealousy and sadness and upset. Many of the emotions we feel are pleasant, and some are unpleasant. You know, there are a lot of highs and lows in life; life is an emotional experience.

And learning how to balance our emotions is -- they call it these days -- emotional intelligence. How to handle the whole range of emotions we feel is hugely important! To learn how to handle our own emotions, but also how to handle the emotions of others. And one of the biggest threats is ... What happens is: when we get into a feeling of threat, and feel defensive or hurt or whatever it is -- and we stay in that place -- it can lead to longstanding anxiety and depression, which has a huge negative impact on our health.

You know, dealing with negative emotions and staying in that place for long periods is like ... Remember when they called it a "gas guzzler?" It's when you fill up your gas, and it just sucks the energy out quickly? Well, that's what happens when we aren't centered emotionally. When we don't know how to handle this, and we keep staying in periods of anger or anxiety or feeling insecurity and unworthiness.

So one of the things we need to do is to learn: how do you take those threats and negative emotions and turn them into positive, affirming emotions? And it's a skill that we need to learn how to do.

Anybody remember John McEnroe? And Jimmy Connors? John McEnroe used to yell and have outbursts and temper tantrums like crazy. And Jimmy Connors was a bit of a hothead, himself, in his early days. They were both incredibly talented. Here's the difference: is that Jimmy Connors, as he got older, actually chilled and relaxed a bit more. He had more passion for the game, more playfulness and more joy. Where McEnroe didn't. You know, he continued to have outbursts.

Now, interestingly, they were both very successful. They both spent time as #1 in the world. But here's where the difference happened: is that Jimmy Connors played until he was 40 years old. McEnroe -- who I think had way more talent -- stopped playing at 34. And he even recognized that his anger and his outbursts did not have a long-term benefit to him. While it seemed like it in a game or a moment here and there, in the long-run holding anger and holding these negative emotions actually has a detrimental impact on us all.

Here's what McEnroe said in his autobiography. He said, *"My shtick, of course, was getting upset. Did it help me more than it hurt me? I don't think so. Ultimately, my father was right. I probably would have done better if I hadn't gotten into that."*

His worst defeat was in 1984 at the French Open. He was playing Ivan Lendl. He was up 2-nothing in sets. And yet, he ended up losing 3 to 2. And he kept getting angry and angry and angry. And he said he wasted a lot of energy and a lot of time, and that's why he lost. Because he kept getting angry, and it sucked his energy out. When Wimbledon came around, he vowed that he wouldn't let his emotions get the best of him. He played Lendl again. He controlled his emotions, and he ended up winning.

And what it is: is why we might see, in moments, having these emotions don't have a big deal, I guarantee you -- in the long run -- the impact of those stress emotions in us will wear us down. They will take their toll unless we learn how to manage our emotions. Unless we learn how to transform the

threats and the anger and the upset and the frustrations, and turn them into peace. And turn them into positivity. Turn them into things that are helpful for us.

And so here are 10 things -- I went wild; I actually have 12, but I'll just do 10 -- of how to develop replenishing rituals to help us become more emotionally intelligent. To help us manage our emotions. And this is probably the toughest of the four -- physical, mental, emotional and spiritual -- is how you manage your emotions. Because staying bottled up is not a healthy thing and a good thing to do.

So the number one ritual is to learn how **to be honest with yourself about what you're feeling**. Sometimes we pretend that we're not hurt. We pretend we're not sad. We even lie to our own selves about it. Just opening and saying, "You know; I feel sad. I feel upset. Sometimes I feel lonely. Sometimes I feel down." I mean, this is just a normal part; we shouldn't feel ashamed for having human emotions. It's not a matter of dwelling there, but just owning and acknowledging it is an important thing. Sometimes doing a little journal to help us recognize and acknowledge it, and just being honest and being aware of it and admitting it actually takes a lot of energy compared to bottling it down.

A second one is: sometimes **have a good cry**. Crying is shown to be a huge, cleansing, releasing, cathartic experience. It is a powerful and important thing.

Another one is: **lean on a friend**. Sometimes talking to a friend and getting some encouragement and support -- you know, knowing someone cares and sharing that bond and connection sometimes -- is a huge, huge and powerful thing.

Another one is: **meditate or do some spiritual study**. Study the Bible; study *A Course in Miracles*; study some of the Self-Realization Fellowship teachings. I mean, it's an important thing that helps us with our emotions.

Another one is: **do something fun**. What's something fun you haven't done for a while? You like dancing? Go dancing! You know, hiking, yoga, playing pickle ball, visiting a museum, playing with a puppy. You know what I like to do? I like watching bloopers of some of my favorite comedy shows. Like, last week I looked at some bloopers of *Seinfeld*. [***Congregation laughs***] And I've got to tell you: when they start cracking up, I can't help but crack up, because there's something fabulous about just having a good belly laugh.

Number six is: just **help somebody**. Volunteer somewhere. Be a mentor to someone. Because it feels good emotionally in just helping another human being.

Another one is: **stretch out of your comfort zone**. What is some area that you have tough time being vulnerable in, and would you be willing to go there? Maybe it's speaking up. Maybe it's setting a new boundary. Maybe it's sharing with somebody that you're having a tough time.

Another one is: **think of positive possibilities** for whatever the thing that's stressing you emotionally. Think of what's a good outcome that could come from this. Maybe think, "*Wow; this will make me stronger. This will make me a better leader. This will probably give me some new ideas to be a better problem-solver.*" Thinking of the possibilities -- the positive possibilities -- of how this thing could turn out is a powerful thing emotionally.

And the final one is an interesting one. Is: **explore the different "opposites" of emotion in your life**. Here's the thing about emotions ... is that we tend to favor one thing over another on a continuum. So I'm going to give you two things, and I want you to notice what you have a tendency more for, and what you have an aversion towards. Because being emotionally intelligent is about accepting and embracing all emotions and understanding them.

So here we go; I hope it will make sense. Okay.

Between these two: are you more likely to gravitate towards toughness or tenderness? Which one has a higher value in how you naturally go in life?

How about this one? Self-control and spontaneity?

How about this one? Honesty and compassion?

And where are you on the continuum of openness and discretion?

How about passion and detachment?

How about generosity and thriftiness?

How about patience and urgency?

How about cautious or boldness?

And last one: confidence or humility?

All of us have our natural tendencies, and sometimes we not only gravitate toward one, but we sometimes have judgement against the other. We need to just notice the different emotions. And it's not about judging ourselves, but it's just having an open space to maybe be more accepting of emotions that aren't in our natural wheelhouse.

Life is an emotional experience. We all have them. We need to learn how to manage, how to respect, and how to balance them in our lives if we want to stay emotionally intelligent. And feel more balance and energize ourselves on an emotional level.

"Be fully engaged." When I first heard that, I thought that means being fully present. Feeling excited and confident about living your best life. And I still kind of feel that. But full engagement really is about realizing that your life is energy. That you have this gift of energy, and there is a law and a rhythmic flow to this energy. And the question is: are you going to choose to work with it? Or are you going to work against it?

Because if we get into the natural rhythmic flow of our energies, and use it, it will increase our energy! It'll increase our effectiveness. It will create balance and our lives, to be our best, and to live our best.

So let's re-energize ourselves! Let's use our most precious resource to replenish ourselves with physical and emotional fuel!

God bless you all!

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